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THE NEW
Fantastic Four
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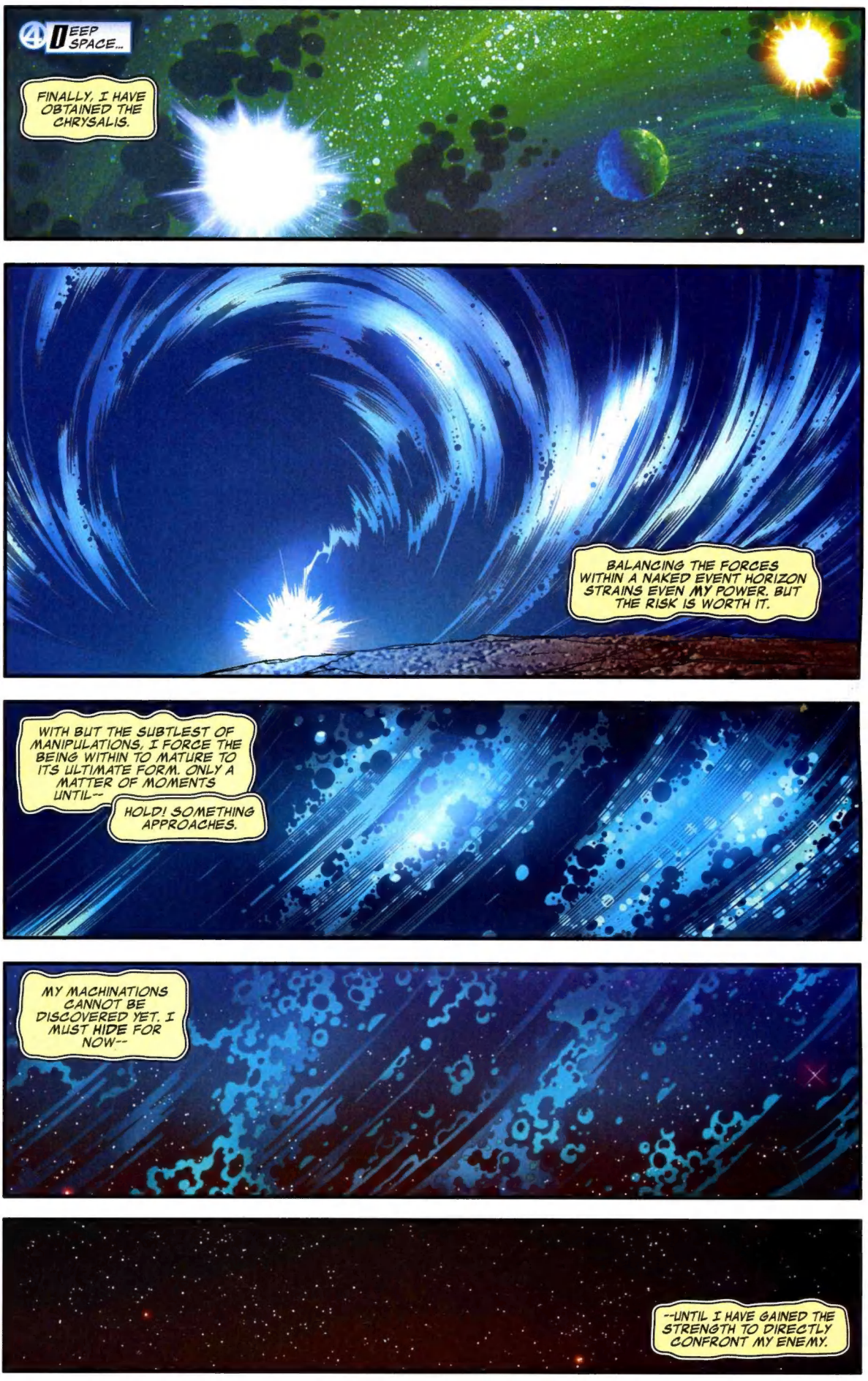
DEEP SPACE...
FINALLY, I HAVE OBTAINED THE CHRYSALIS.
BALANCING THE FORCES WITHIN A NAKED EVENT HORIZON STRAINS EVEN MY POWER. BUT THE RISK IS WORTH IT.
WITH BUT THE SUBTLEST OF MANIPULATIONS, I FORCE THE BEING WITHIN TO MATURE TO ITS ULTIMATE FORM. ONLY A MATTER OF MOMENTS UNTIL--
HOLD! SOMETHING APPROACHES.
MY MACHINATIONS CANNOT BE DISCOVERED YET. I MUST HIDE FOR NOW--
--UNTIL I HAVE GAINED THE STRENGTH TO DIRECTLY CONFRONT MY ENEMY.

THIS IS WHERE I SENSED IT. BUT THERE IS NOTHING HERE. JUST AN ECHO. A MEMORY.
AM I MISTAKEN? OR IS THERE AN INTELLIGENCE AT WORK HERE CAPABLE OF DECEIVING EVEN MY SENSES?
FORGIVE ME FOR DISTURBING YOU, SENTINEL, BUT I HAVE NEED OF YOUR EXPERTISE.
I SENSED POWER FOR A MOMENT, POWER OF THE RARE SORT THE MASTER SO DESPERATELY REQUIRES. BUT I HAVE LOST THE TRAIL.
I HAVE RECEIVED YOUR SENSORY IMPRESSION, STARDUST. FOR A MOMENT, SPACE-TIME WAS RICH AND SALTY, LIKE THE AROMA OF A LIVING OCEAN. THEN SUDDENLY, IT WAS GONE.
I BELIEVE YOUR QUARRY HAS CLOAKED HIS LOCATION. I AM ON MY WAY.
IF SUCH IS THE CASE, THERE IS ONE WHOSE SENSES ARE EVEN MORE FINELY TUNED THAN MINE.

A team--and a family--of adventurers, explorers and imaginauts, the Fantastic Four lead lives both ordinary--and extraordinary!

Fantastic Four

When a Superhuman Registration Act was proposed which would require all people possessing paranormal abilities to register with the government, Mr. Fantastic sided with the new law and became a leading force in the pro-registration movement. His stance caused a sharp divide within the Fantastic Four, with the Invisible Woman and Human Torch leaving to join the anti-registration movement and the Thing choosing to remain neutral and relocate to France.

Now the Fantastic Four have reunited and reconciled...but Reed and Sue have chosen to take a break from the team and have just introduced Johnny and Ben to their replacements--the Black Panther and Storm!

Elsewhere...

When the cosmic being known as the Stranger transplanted a diverse group of superhumans to the Battleworld, Greg Willis--the young super hero known as Gravity--perished in a successful attempt to save the lives of his friends. Those who were saved, whose numbers included Michael Collins, formerly the pacifist killing machine known as Deathlok, mourned the loss of a promising new hero.

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THE BAXTER BUILDING. HEADQUARTERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR.
COULD YOU GO AGAIN? I'M NOT FOLLOWIN' THIS.
REED AND I ARE TAKING SOME TIME OFF.
TO RECONNECT. A SECOND HONEYMOON, OF SORTS.
T'CHALLA AND ORORO WILL BE STAYING HERE FOR A WHILE.

RECONSTRUCTION: CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE RIDICULOUS TO THE SUBLIME*

*BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER.

DWAYNE McDUFFIE	PAUL PELLETIER	RICK MAGYAR	PAUL MOUNTS	VC'S RUS WOOTON	MOLLY LAZER	TOM BREVOORT	JOE QUESADA	DAN BUCKLEY
WRITER	PENCILER	INKERS	COLORIST	LETTERER	ASST. EDITOR	EDITOR	EDITOR IN CHIEF	PUBLISHER

THE WAKANDAN EMBASSY HAS BEEN DESTROYED.
I HAD A... DISAGREEMENT WITH DR. RICHARDS' CLONE OF THOR.
AGAIN, YOU HAVE MY SINCERE APOLOGIES. I FAILED TO FORESEE THE--
I DON'T BELIEVE FOR A MOMENT THAT YOU WOULD HAVE DONE WHAT YOU DID IF YOU'D ANTICIPATED THE RESULTS.
IN ANY EVENT, THE NEW YORK BRANCH OF MY EMBASSY WAS REDUCED TO RUBBLE.
BUT IT'S WHAT WE FOUND IN THE RUBBLE THAT WAS SO TROUBLING...
YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME ASK "WHAT," AREN'T YOU?
BOMBS, JOHNNY--
"THE BUILDING WAS FULL OF BOMBS.
"AND THEY WERE SET TO DETONATE LESS THAN THREE HOURS AFTER THE BATTLE THAT ACCIDENTALLY REVEALED THEIR PRESENCE."
MY OWN SECURITY FORCE IS QUITE CAPABLE OF HANDLING THIS, DR. RICHARDS.

THE SAME SECURITY FORCE THAT ALLOWED FOURTEEN OF THESE DEVICES TO BE HIDDEN IN YOUR EMBASSY?
POINT TAKEN. AND LIKELY MORE THAN FOURTEEN.
I SUSPECT THAT SEVERAL OF THE SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS DURING THE FIGHT WILL PROVE TO HAVE BEEN A RESULT OF THESE DEVICES, AND NOT OF ORORO'S FURY.
S.H.I.E.L.D. WILL FIND OUT WHO'S RESPONSIBLE, KING T'CHALLA. YOU HAVE MY WORD.
AND YOU HAVE MINE, STARK. SHOULD IT EVENTUATE THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT INTERESTS, OR EVEN S.H.I.E.L.D. HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS--
--THE CONSEQUENCES WILL BE DIRE.
EASY, YOUR HIGHNESS. LET'S NOT MAKE THREATS IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT.
REED, COULD I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU IN PRIVATE?

WE HAVEN'T TALKED SINCE CAP TURNED HIMSELF IN. I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE WE'RE OKAY.
NOT REALLY A PRIORITY FOR ME, TONY. I'M LEAVING TOWN FOR A WHILE. WITH SUE. WE'RE GOING TO TRY AND WORK ON OUR MARRIAGE.
THAT'S GREAT, REED. REALLY. I'M SORRY THIS MESS COST YOU SO MUCH.
BUT IF I COULD ASK YOU JUST ONE MORE FAVOR?
T'CHALLA'S CAUSING A LOT OF TROUBLE ON THE WORLD STAGE. IF YOU COULD CONVINCE HIM TO GO BACK TO WAKANDA, LET THINGS SETTLE DOWN A BIT...
HE'LL LISTEN TO YOU. HE DOESN'T AGREE WITH YOU, BUT HE RESPECTS YOU.
WORK ON HIM, FOR ME.
I DON'T THINK THAT'S SUCH A GOOD IDEA.
WHY NOT?
ONE, I AGREE WITH HIS POSITION AGAINST THE MILITARIZATION OF SUPERBEINGS.

AND TWO, I'M ALMOST CERTAIN HE PLANTED A TRANSMITTER ON YOU A FEW MINUTES AGO.
HE'S PROBABLY LISTENING TO OUR ENTIRE CONVERSATION.
LISTENING, AND THINKING. I'M INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT STARK WASN'T RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BOMBS.
BUT HE WASN'T ABOVE TRYING TO USE THEM TO HIS ADVANTAGE.
IN HIS POSITION, I WOULD DO THE SAME.
BUT IF SOMEONE IS INTENDING TO KILL YOU--
THEY ARE.
--THEY NEED A SECURE PLACE TO STAY.

...SO, THANKS TO THE GENEROSITY OF THE RICHARDS FAMILY, FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE THE BAXTER BUILDING WILL SERVE AS THE OFFICIAL WAKANDAN EMBASSY.
WHY ARE YOU SPENDING SO MUCH TIME IN THE UNITED STATES? DON'T YOU HAVE A COUNTRY TO RUN?
MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO WAKANDA ARE BEST SERVED HERE. THE U.S. POLICY OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER SUPERBEINGS IS DESTABILIZING THE BALANCE OF POWER ACROSS THE GLOBE.
I WILL REMAIN HERE, WORKING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS, UNTIL A SUITABLE SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM IS FOUND.
DR. RICHARDS, WOULD YOU COMMENT ON PUBLISHED REPORTS THAT YOU AND SUE RICHARDS ARE QUITTING THE FANTASTIC FOUR?
NO. WE'RE SIMPLY TAKING SOME TIME OFF.
IT'S BEEN A VERY STRESSFUL YEAR FOR US. WE'VE DECIDED TO TAKE A SECOND HONEYMOON.
WELL, ACTUALLY A FIRST HONEYMOON, NOW THAT I THINK OF IT. WE NEVER QUITE GOT AROUND TO HAVING ONE, WHAT WITH SUPER-VILLAINS AND ALIEN INVASIONS AND ALL.

SO ARE THE BLACK PANTHER AND STORM OFFICIALLY JOINING THE FANTASTIC FOUR?
THE FANTASTIC FOUR IS A FAMILY, NOT A TEAM. THERE IS NO OFFICIAL ROSTER.
SO WHY THE MATCHING BLACK F.F. UNIFORMS?
MY AUNT PETUNIA ALWAYS TOLD ME IT NEVER HURTS TA COLOR-COORDINATE.
WE ARE GUESTS IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S HOME--
--IT WOULD BE RUDE NOT TO HELP OUT SHOULD CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRE IT.
YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD AT THE P.R. STUFF.
THANK YOU. BUT IT'S AN ADJUSTMENT.
STORM OF THE X-MEN CAN SPEAK HER MIND WITHOUT REGARD TO CONSEQUENCES. QUEEN ORORO OF WAKANDA HAS TO CHOOSE HER WORDS WITH FAR GREATER CARE.
"QUEEN ORORO." THAT'S A MOUTHFUL. WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING ROYALTY?
CHALLENGING. BUT IT'S A PRICE I HAPPILY PAY TO HAVE A LIFE WITH THE MAN THAT I LOVE.

MAKIN' YERSELF AT HOME?
I AM, THANK YOU.
I GUESS SARCASM DOESN'T TRAVEL AS WELL AS I'D LIKE. I WAS MOUTHIN' OFF.
I UNDERSTOOD THAT, BUT I KNOW YOU DIDN'T MEAN IT, SO I IGNORED IT.
AWFULLY MATURE OF YOU.
MY WIFE'S GOOD HABITS SEEM TO BE RUBBING OFF ON ME.
DID REED AND SUE LEAVE ALREADY?
YEAH, THEY SAID SOMETHING ABOUT A HOTEL ON TITAN.
I'D THOUGHT I'D STAYED AT EVERY 5-STAR HOTEL IN THE WORLD. I DON'T KNOW THE TITAN.
THERE'S YER PROBLEM, I SAID "HOTEL ON TITAN," ONE O' SATURN'S MOONS.
AH.
"BEAUTIFUL NIGHT SKY," REED SEZ. "WORTH THE TRIP."
ONE IMAGINES.

PARDON THE INTERRUPTION, MY CHIEFTAIN.
WHAT'S THE BIG RUSH, W'KABI?
A FRIEND OF WAKANDA WISHES AN AUDIENCE. NORMALLY I WOULDN'T BOTHER YOU WITH THIS, BUT IT IS THE HERO OF THE BATTLE OF CANAAN. AND HE SAYS IT IS IMPORTANT.
DEATHLOK IS HERE? BRING HIM IN...
YOU'RE DEATHLOK?
USED TO BE.
THE CYBORG I FOUGHT THOSE DOOMBOTS WITH?
YEAH. THAT WAS A WHILE BACK. I'M CURED NOW. HUMAN.
IT IS AS HE SAYS. HIS DNA MATCHES THE SCANS WE TOOK FROM THE CYBORG YEARS AGO.
MY APOLOGIES, MICHAEL, BUT WE HAD TO BE SURE.
NO PROBLEM. IT'S A LOT TO SWALLOW.
INTERESTING. LOOKING AT THESE SCANS...ARE YOU AWARE THAT YOUR BODY--
YEAH. CAN'T DEAL WITH THAT NOW. I'VE GOT A MORE PRESSING CONCERN. KIND OF A MYSTERY...

SHORTLY...
THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR CALLED ME BECAUSE I ARRANGED THE SERVICES. THE BODY'S GONE. THE REST YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELVES.
I DON'T THINK I EVER HEARD OF THIS KID.
GRAVITY
PROBABLY NOT. GRAVITY WAS A NEWBIE. HE DIED SAVING ME, MEDUSA, JANET VAN DYNE, HENRY PYM AND SOME OTHER GUYS FROM THE STRANGER NOT TOO LONG AGO.
IT WAS A BIG DEAL. EVEN THE WATCHER SHOWED UP.
THIS AIN'T RIGHT.
THE AREA IS SATURATED WITH READINGS THAT MATCH REISSNER-NORDSTRÖM METRICS.
THINGS ARE SO MUCH EASIER WITHOUT REED AROUND TA CONFUSE US WITH ALL THE BIG WORDS.

THERE WAS A BLACK HOLE HERE, ONE WITH AN ELECTRIC CHARGE.
CAN YOUR INSTRUMENTS TRACK IT?
IT SHOULDN'T HAVE EVEN BEEN ABLE TO EXIST HERE.
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A "NO."
IT'S A SHAME THE WATCHER AIN'T HERE NOW. WE COULD JUST ASK HIM WHAT HAPPENED.
WHY DON'T WE?
I LOVE MY WIFE.
SERIOUSLY, WHY DON'T WE WHAT?

EXACTLY HOW MANY SPACECRAFT DOES DR. RICHARDS HAVE?
I DUNNO. COUPLE OF DOZEN THAT I KNOW ABOUT...
BUT THIS IS HIS NEW ONE. IT'S A FOLD SHIP.
I READ HIS PAPER ON SPACE-FOLDING TECHNOLOGY, BUT I THOUGHT IT WAS THEORETICAL.
IT WAS, BUT THAT WAS LAST YEAR. HE'S WORKED OUT THE BUGS.
FOUR MINUTES TO ORBIT ON THE THRUSTERS, THEN WE FIRE UP THE SPACEFOLD DRIVE AND WE'RE ON THE MOON LIKE THAT.
SNAP!
I CAN'T WAIT TO TRY IT OUT.
BEFORE YOU DO, I WANT TO MAKE SURE EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THE PLAN.
THE WATCHER IS A MEMBER OF AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL RACE OF UNFATHOMABLE POWER.
THEY OBSERVE EVENTS OF COSMIC SIGNIFICANCE, BUT ARE SWORN NEVER TO INTERFERE--
HONEY? I KNOW ALL ABOUT THE WATCHER. I'VE MET HIM.
YES. WELL...

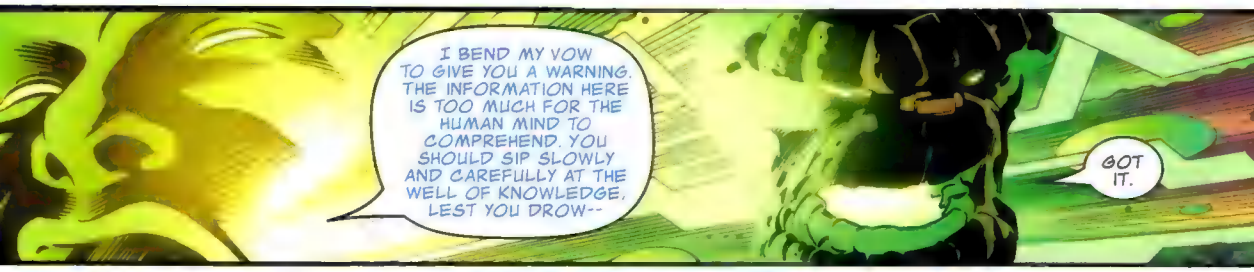
SERIOUSLY. WHO HERE HASN'T MET THE WATCHER? SHOW OF HANDS.
I'VE NEVER BEEN TO HIS HOUSE...
THAT'S ABOUT TO CHANGE. DON'T WORRY YOUR WHISKERS, T'CHARLIE, WE ALL KNOW THE PLAN...
...TIME TA GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD.
NOW THAT'S HOW YOU TRAVEL.

BACK WHEN I HAD POWERS, I NEVER GOT TO GO ON SPACE MISSIONS.
DON'T GET USED TO IT, MICHAEL. THIS IS A ONE-OFF.
SO HOW DO WE GET THE WATCHER'S ATTENTION?
BY SETTING SOMETHING ON FIRE, I HOPE. I'M REALLY GOOD AT THAT.
I DON'T THINK THAT WILL BE NECESSARY.
HEY, WATCHER!
IT'S YER OLD PAL, THE EVER-LOVIN' BLUE-EYED THING.
SO, UH, HOW'S IT HANGIN'? I GUESS IF YOUR SKIRT WERE ANY SHORTER, WE'D ALL KNOW THE ANSWER. AM I RIGHT?

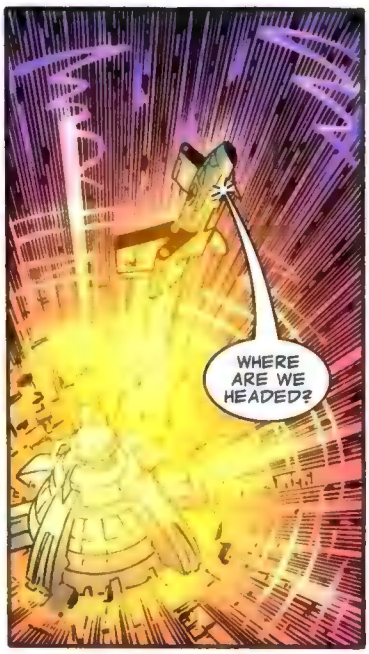
HE USED TA BE FRIENDLIER.
I'D HOPED YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM WOULD MAKE THIS EASIER. IT APPEARS WE'LL HAVE TO DO THIS THE HARD WAY.
DID YOU GET IT?
JOHNNY'S DIRECTIONS WERE QUITE SPECIFIC.
HERE YOU ARE.
LAST CHANCE, WATCHER. TALK TO US--
--OR FACE THE CONSEQUENCES.
YOU'VE STOLEN MY ULTIMATE NULLIFIER?
WE'RE TALKING NOW? GOOD, THEN MAYBE I WON'T HAVE TO USE THIS.
THERE'S NO REASON TO MAKE THREATS, T'CHALLA. YOU'RE FAR TOO INTELLIGENT TO USE THE NULLIFIER.
DON'T TEST MY RESOLVE, UATU.

THE ULTIMATE NULLIFIER DESTROYS ITS TARGET. BUT IT ALSO DESTROYS ITS WIELDER. UTTERLY.
PULL THAT TRIGGER AND YOU AND I WILL BE WIPED FROM REALITY. WE WILL NEVER HAVE EXISTED.
THAT WOULD BE A PITY, CONSIDERING THE ASTONISHING DESTINY OF THE CHILDREN YOU AND ORORO WILL SOMEDAY HAVE.
OUR CHILDREN?
OR DID YOU THINK I ATTENDED YOUR WEDDING MERELY FOR THE SHRIMP COCKTAIL?
LOOK, WE JUST CAME HERE TA GET SOME INFO.
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, I'D SAY.
WE KNOW YOUR RACE GATHERS INFORMATION. I ASSUME YOU STORE IT SOMEWHERE. WE SIMPLY WISH TO ACCESS IT.
WHAT SHE SAID. WE WANT A LIBRARY CARD.
YOU HAD BUT TO ASK.
I AM, AS ARE ALL OF MY RACE, FORBIDDEN TO INTERFERE...

WELCOME TO THE CYCLOPEDIA UNIVERSUM.
HERE IS STORED THE COMBINED KNOWLEDGE OF EVERY WATCHER WHO EVER LIVED. IT IS THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE.


I BEND MY VOW TO GIVE YOU A WARNING. THE INFORMATION HERE IS TOO MUCH FOR THE HUMAN MIND TO COMPREHEND. YOU SHOULD SIP SLOWLY AND CAREFULLY AT THE WELL OF KNOWLEDGE, LEST YOU DROW--
GOT IT.

YOU "GOT IT"? JUST LIKE THAT?
YEP. WHAT CAN I SAY? I GOT GOOD CONCENTRATION.


WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

I SAW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE KID'S BODY. IT WAS STOLEN BY SOME COSMIC MUCKETY-MUCK. ONE O' THOSE ONE-NAME CONCEPTUAL GUYS.
I ALSO PICKED UP THE COORDINATES TO WHERE HE TOOK IT.

HER NAME'S EPOCH. IF IT'S POSSIBLE, SHE'S EVEN UGLIER THAN EON, HER DADDY.
GO AWAY FROM THIS PLACE! YOU ARE DABBLING IN FORCES--
--"BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION." WE KNOW. IT'S KIND OF OUR SPECIALTY.
THAT'S US. FROM THE RIDICULOUS TO THE SUBLIME.
BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER.
WHATEVER YOU ARE, I NEED YOU TO RETURN GREG WILLIS' BODY. WHAT YOU'VE DONE IS OBSCENE.
WHAT I'VE DONE IS, AS I HAVE SAID, BEYOND YOUR COMPREHENSION. GO NOW, BEFORE YOUR MEDDLING RUINS A PLAN YEARS IN THE MAKING.
THIS IS NOT NEGOTIABLE. GIVE US THE BOY.
DO NOT MAKE DEMANDS OF ME. THIS IS A DELICATE MOMENT.

YOUR REQUEST WILL SOON BE MOOT. BUT I MUST REMAIN HIDDEN UNTIL THEN.
ENOUGH OF THIS. LAND ON HER. LIKELY THE BODY IS SOMEWHERE ON HER SURFACE.
I WUZ THINKING THE SAME THING...
DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS!
I BEG OF YOU, YOU MUST LEAVE! THE ENERGIES I'M RELEASING ARE DETECTABLE, THE TRAIL YOU LEFT TRAVELING HERE CAN BE FOLLOWED...
IF I AM DISCOVERED BY THE HERALD, HE WILL NOT BE FAR BEHIND! I AM NOT YET PREPARED FOR SUCH A CONFRONTATION!
THAT'S SWEET. LONG AS WE'RE SHARIN', I KNOW THE NAME OF A BODY SHOP THAT CAN HAMMER OUT THE DENTS I'M ABOUT TO PUT IN YOUR FACE.
ANYBODY GOT THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHAT SHE'S YAKKIN' ABOUT? WHAT'S SHE SO SCARED OF?
I DON'T KNOW. YOUR DRIVING?
I WOULD OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE THEORY. SHE WAS RIGHTFULLY FEARFUL--

--THAT I WOULD FIND HER.
4
NEXT: THE SILVER SURFER

BLASTY

Digital Comics Preservation